



Wes Moore | Governor

Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor

Carmel Roques | Secretary

Date: February 7, 2024

Bill Number: **SB 226**

Bill Title: Human Services - Attendant Care Program - Ongoing Additional Supports

Committee: Senate Finance

MDOA Position: FAVORABLE

The Department of Aging (MDOA) submits this testimony in support of Senate Bill (SB) 226 - Human Services - Attendant Care Program - Ongoing Additional Supports.

The Maryland Department of Aging (MDOA) serves as Maryland's State Unit of Aging, administering federal funding for core programs, overseeing the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) network at the local level that provides services, and planning for Maryland's older adult population. Pursuant to a recent Executive Order, in January 2024, MDOA launched the Longevity-Ready Maryland Initiative,¹ which will build upon existing efforts across state agencies, private and philanthropic sectors and other stakeholders to tackle real-life challenges throughout the lifespan, taking a whole-of-life and whole-of-government approach. Key goals of Longevity-Ready Maryland are: for all Marylanders to afford and enjoy their longer lives with increased access to healthcare and retirement needs; and promote opportunities for all, regardless of age or ability; and optimizing health, wellness and mobility, delaying dependency.

SB226, which would modernize and add needed flexibility to the Department of Disabilities' attendant care program, squarely furthers these goals. The program serves adults up to age 64, assisting individual participants with severe chronic or permanent physical disabilities who need attendant care services to direct their own care at home, school, work, or other community locations. Long overdue for an update and higher utilization, SB 226 would keep remaining services covered and expand to allow reimbursement for commonly available services like: grocery and prescription delivery, laundry and ride-sharing services, and potentially other

¹ More on Longevity-Ready MD Initiative available at: <https://aging.maryland.gov/Pages/LRM.aspx>



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app-based and online services that may suit participants' needs and fit the goals of the program. These improvements will support more Marylanders in living, working, and attending school with higher degrees of independence in their communities. Programs and related efforts like this are absolutely part of our journey to becoming longevity-ready.

MDOA thanks the Department of Disabilities for their leadership and respectfully urges a favorable report for SB226. If you have any questions, please contact Andrea Nunez, Legislative Director, at andrea.nunez@maryland.gov or (443) 414-8183.

Sincerely,

Carmel Roques
Secretary
Maryland Department of Aging